

STATE TELECOMMUNICATIONS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

State of California
Department of Technology Services

Statewide Telecommunications
and Network Division

Category:

**Acquiring
Telecommunications
Services**

Chapter Title:

**Personal
Communication
Devices**

Chapter Number:

0508.0

Issued: September 30, 1996

Revised: October 24, 2008

PURPOSE

This section provides guidelines to agencies for the management of personal communication devices (PCD), which includes, but is not limited to, cellular phones, pagers and personal digital assistants (PDAs) and related items or configurations that permit remote communication and messaging.

POLICY

State agencies are responsible for implementing good business practices in the deployment and use of personal communications devices (PCDs) in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

GUIDELINES

Any agency policy regarding the use of PCD usage should be consistent with the following criteria.

Acquiring PCDs and Service Plans

Follow the Department of General Services-Procurement Division (DGS-PD) rules and regulations regarding the acquisition of PCDs. If not already done, consider centralizing the management of PCDs in your agency to help maintain standards and policies and adherence to DGS procurement rules and regulations.

Review the terms and conditions of PCD service plans, and select plans that correspond to actual usage levels.

Regularly review rates and services to help assure the best choice for the particular requirements of your agency, and for specific programs and employees.

Issuing PCDs

PCDs should be issued only when required for the specific functions performed by the employee, and after thoroughly considering the various communications requirements and alternatives (such as using a pager instead of a cellular phone). Consider having a “general use” pool for PCDs that can be “checked-out” by employees only when needed for specific purposes.

The following justification criteria are recommended situations for the issue (or temporary use) of PCDs.

Public Safety – Immediate direct communication is required with local police, fire and/or emergency medical units (9-1-1) or immediate communication is required with the agency, where absence of communication would be clearly detrimental to the state or the public.

Emergencies – Immediate communication required to notify or provide status updates for natural disaster (e.g. earthquake, floods, etc.).

Operational Functions – Direct communication required to conduct necessary State business and where access to a conventional telephone system or pay phone is non-existent.

Using PCDs

As with conventional telephones, PCDs are for state business related activities. Set standards for the use and care of the PCDs, including what to do in the event they are lost, stolen or damaged.

- Discourage excessive connection times that may generate additional charges or prematurely deplete plan minutes.
- Limit or ban out-of-state or overseas usage, as applicable.
- Establish safety criteria. For example: making phone calls or utilizing PCSs while driving can be a safety hazard due to the distraction and the difficulty to maintain a high level of attention to traffic. Emphasize that drivers should use PCDs while parked or out of the vehicle.

Managing PCDs

Regularly evaluate the assignment and use of PCDs: review and analyze the associated service plans with the vendor. A rate plan analysis can help identify plans that better align with actual usage.

When evaluating the results of the rate plan analysis, look for cost related or usage factors for each PCD. For example: check whether few or no airtime minutes are being used, or if service plans do not coincide closely with actual usage. Also, consider ways to avoid costly roaming charges – if an employee regularly travels to the same specific area of the state, a PCD with a second phone number (or sole phone number) from that area could be of benefit.

Establish a practice for managers and supervisors to regularly review PCD bills for adherence to usage guidelines established by the agency, and to help detect fraud and abuse. For example: excessive usage and a wide variety of area codes on the bills may indicate that a PCD has been misused or “cloned”. Cloning occurs when the service number is replicated on an unauthorized PCD, which may lead to unauthorized usage and charges.

Regularly identify and eliminate all inactive PCD accounts. A surprising number of unused devices continue to remain active when employees leave or transfer. Establish procedures that will help ensure timely retrieval of PCD equipment and deactivation of inactive PCD accounts.